

Killing Katie
Audition Pieces

Pages	Angela	Robyn	Katie	Sam	Linda
4-7					
16-18					
19-22					
46-49					
52-54					
62-64					
65-67					
70-73					
78-80					
88-89					
107-110					
113-116					



Focus character

Sam / Linda

1 - BAR (PRESENT)

(LINDA waits at a bar table. She glances at her watch. She looks slightly anxious. The waitress brings her some complimentary bread and a small bowl of olives.)

WAITRESS

With our compliments.

(Linda smiles but then notices what is being put on the table.)

LINDA
(quickly)

No! No olives. I hate them.

(The waitress is taken aback.)

LINDA
(embarrassed)

Sorry ... I've never liked them.

(The waitress walks away unimpressed. Linda is mortified. She knows exactly why she reacted that way. She addresses the audience ...)

LINDA

Actually I did once. I loved them. But that was a long time ago....

(She pauses.)
(beat)

Have you ever felt guilty? No, not scoffing Tim Tams on the way home from the gym or pretending to be asleep at "business time" guilty. I mean seriously, deeply guilty...

(beat)

It's a feeling that lurks. Creeps up on you. I mean usually we put on our "everything's great" mask and keep looking ahead. Never look back. Just keep (sings) *swimming, swimming, swimming*. But then some tiny moment ... a song, a fragrance, a laugh. And it's right there in front of you again.

Sam / Linda

(a long beat)

And if you've been spared the public trial, you spend your life attending the private one. The one where you're the judge, jury and accused. The one where you ask the questions, you struggle to find the answers, you acquit, condemn and retry. Over and over.

And when it finally gets too much - the only hope is finding someone who might share the burden.

(beat)

But that involves risk. That means letting someone into your personal courtroom. And then you worry. Will they sit beside you in the dock? Or will they take up the gavel and with one loud BANG ...

(BANG! - the door to the cafe slams open to reveal Sam, in active wear. She bends forward to catch her breath.)

LINDA
(cont, whispers)

Condemn you ...

(Sam hurries over to meet her trying to catch her breath.)

SAM

Linda! Hi. Sorry I'm late.

LINDA
(smiles)

Just like old times.

(realising)

You didn't jog here?

SAM

Yes. I've had a meeting this afternoon and I had to miss pilates this morning because I got caught up with a client and I'm taking the twins out for a birthday dinner because I'll be in Adelaide at a conference tomorrow.

LINDA

Yep. Just like old times.

SAM

No. No. I'm much less manic these days.

(Linda looks doubtful.)

Sam / Linda

SAM

Really! I am.

LINDA

Well it's lovely to see you. It's been such a long time.

SAM

Too long. What is it? Ten years?

(Sam takes her seat opposite
Linda.)

LINDA

More.

(The waiter brings water and
complimentary olives for Sam. She
waves them away instantly.)

SAM

No! No olives!

(realising, to Linda)

Sorry. Do you (want them?)

LINDA

(over)

No! Not me.

LINDA/SAM

(together)

I'm sorry I... didn't) / You know I'm sorry...(I didn't)

(They laugh.)

LINDA

You go ...

SAM

Well I always meant to get in touch.

LINDA

Me too.

SAM

It was just all a bit weird wasn't it.

Sam / Linda

LINDA

Yes. It was. And it feels like yesterday.

SAM

It does? I mean, I still think about it.

LINDA
(relieved)

You do?

SAM
(back stepping)

Well yeah ... Sometimes. When I can't avoid it. I used to have nightmares.

(Linda is desperate not to feel
alone in her guilt.)

LINDA

But not anymore? Not ever?

SAM

I had to let it go.

(Sam's phone rings.)

Oh god. Sorry.

(She takes it out of the case on
her arm and turns it off.)

LINDA

What! You're not going to take it?

SAM

Nope.

LINDA

Well, maybe it isn't exactly like old times.

SAM

I don't do that any more Linda. When I'm here with you, I'm here with you.
Ahhhh

LINDA

What?!

SAM

Cramp.

(Sam stands and stretches as ...)

3 - ANGELA/ROBYN'S HOUSE (PAST)

(Sam has just told Angela and Robyn she's invited a new member.)

SAM

I don't know. I just thought a new member might ... liven things up a bit.

ROBYN
(horrified)

What?

ANGELA

Didn't realise we were so dull.

SAM

We aren't. But a fresh perspective.

ROBYN

I'd have thought it was a group decision.

SAM
(laughs)

What? Like everything else.

ROBYN

What does that mean?

SAM

Oh nothing. Look it was a spur of the moment thing.

ROBYN

Well that's comforting. You put no thought into it.

SAM

No. I just ... You'll love her.

ANGELA

It's fair enough Robyn. You chose the rest of us.

ROBYN

Way I remember it mother, you invited yourself.

ANGELA

I'll check the hors d' oeuvres.

(Angela escapes to the kitchen.)

Robyn / Sam

ROBYN
(to Sam)

What sort of books does she like?

SAM

I don't know.

ROBYN

Genres?

SAM

I didn't grill her.

ROBYN

Why not?

SAM

Like you grilled us?

ROBYN

No I didn't.

(The others swap a look.)

ROBYN
(surprised)

Did I? I thought it was just a nice ... chat.

SAM
(laughs)

Some chat.

LINDA

My worst interview ever. Felt sure I wouldn't be offered a position.

ROBYN
(laughs)

It wasn't a job interview!

(The others just smile.)

ROBYN
(smiles)

Oh stop it! I just didn't want any time wasters. You make people feel like they've earned it they take it seriously.

Robyn / Sam

LINDA

You're right. The last thing you want in a book club is someone who doesn't finish the books for example.

(Linda winks at Sam.)

SAM

Couldn't agree more.

ROBYN

And if it's a privilege not a given, people take more interest. What's that Groucho Marx saying?

LINDA/SAM

(together)

"I don't want to belong to any club that will accept me as a member."

(They all laugh.)

ROBYN

(to Linda)

You know it was your love of quotes that won me over. As soon as you told me you collect them.

SAM

Yeah. Very cute. What got me over the line?

ROBYN

Oh you were in before you crossed the threshold.

(The others look confused.)

ANGELA

You brought cake!!

(They laugh.)

ROBYN

And you were on time!

SAM

And a month later you banned cake.

ROBYN

AND you were never on time again.

(They all laugh again. Robyn glances at the clock on the wall.)

Katie

Despite her tough exterior she is
anxious meeting new people.)

ROBYN

So what time did you tell her?

(Before Sam can answer the door
bangs open and Katie arrives in a
whirlwind of energy, juggling a
heavy bag of books, a cake half
sliding off a plate, a jacket and
flowers. Angela greets her at the
door.)

KATIE

Hello, hello. Sorry I'm late. But hey, I've brought cake!

(The others swap a look.)

ANGELA
(noticing)

And flowers!

(She goes to take them but Katie
snatches them away.)

KATIE

Nope. They're for my Mum.

(Angela is a little taken aback.)

ANGELA
(miffed)

Oh ... How lovely.

(pointed to Robyn)

Flowers for her mother!

KATIE

You must be Robyn.

(Katie pulls Angela in for a hug.
Angela is amused.)

ANGELA

Ah, no. That's Robyn.

(Katie moves to hug Robyn, who cuts
her off by extending her hand.

Katie grabs it and shakes
vigorously.)

KATIE

Hi Robyn. Katie, no middle name, Kline. I always say that. Bitter about missing
out.

ROBYN

Robyn Jane Winters. Not bitter at all.

ANGELA

On a good day.

KATIE
(laughs)

What do you do Robyn?

ROBYN

I'm in publishing.

KATIE

Ooo I'm intimidated already.

ANGELA

She's a sales rep.

(Robyn is not happy with this
description.)

LINDA
(quickly)

For a publishing house.

ROBYN

It suits me to be around writers and editors. I'm planning my own novel.

ANGELA

Ahh yes. Always planning. I'm Angela. Mother of aforementioned sales rep.

KATIE

Ah, the real genius of the family.

ANGELA

I'm going to like you. Very intuitive.

KATIE
(laughs loudly)

Ha!! I've never been accused of that before.

SAM
(to Katie)

And this is Linda. Mother of two, former librarian and fabulous stylist.

LINDA

Sam!

(Katie hugs Linda who, while surprised, likes how confident and upfront this new woman is.)

SAM

Not to mention modest.

LINDA
(to Katie)

It's more of a hobby.

ROBYN

Oh stop feeling insecure ... plenty of people operate without actual qualifications.

(LINDA is stung but lets it go.)

KATIE

Great. I'll pick your brains for tips when you're at my place.

ROBYN

I host book club.

SAM

Linda and I have families. Too crazy. Well, you know my boys.

KATIE

Oh yes. Crazy barely covers it.

SAM

You should meet my teenage daughter.

(Her phone rings. It's a flip phone from early 2000's)

ROBYN
(irritated)

Speak of the daughter.

SAM
(re phone call)

Sorry.

(As Sam moves away.)

SAM
Hi darling. Can I call you back. (listens) Yes, but ... (listens) I'm at bookclub can I ... (listens) No. He didn't! What did you say?

ROBYN
(re Sam)
She's ruined her life getting that thing.

KATIE
(laughs)
What! The daughter?

ROBYN
The phone. Hideous distraction.

KATIE
(shocked)
You don't have one?!

ROBYN
Passing fad.

KATIE
(wry)
Yeah, like electricity.

ROBYN
I value my down time. I'm a busy woman.

ANGELA
Oh please.

(Robyn shoots her mother a look.)

KATIE
(wry to Angela)
Well she is in "publishing."

(Katie touches Robyn's arm as she says it. Robyn almost cringes at the uninvited intimacy.)

6 - ANGELA/ROBYN'S HOUSE (PAST)

(Later the same night, Robyn and Linda are cleaning up after book club. There is tension in the air.)

LINDA

Hey I meant to thank you for Ollie's latest book.

ROBYN

No problem. Did he like it?

LINDA

Loved it. You know you are solely responsible for making that child a reader.

ROBYN

Not solely. I did scheme with his loving mother.

LINDA

Well the letterbox elf saved us. He loves your choices. I only wish you'd stop in and meet him one time.

ROBYN

And risk the mystery. Never.
(admits)
Besides, children scare me.

LINDA

You! Why?

ROBYN
(admits)

Because the last time I knew any, I was one.

LINDA

He'd love you.

ROBYN
(chuffed)

Oh I doubt that.

LINDA

He would!

(Robyn habitually deflects the praise.)

Robyn / Linda

ROBYN

Listen, thanks for agreeing to stay and help clean up. I'm exhausted.

(Linda looks at her watch.)

LINDA

We ran later than usual.

ROBYN

Too late. Though not surprising.

LINDA

Why?

ROBYN

Well, there were more of us. More opinions.

(forced light)

And it wasn't easy to get a word in.

LINDA

Yes. It was ... energetic.

ROBYN

Mmm. What do you think of Katie?

(Angela bustles in from the kitchen
with clean cutlery to put away.)

ANGELA

I like her.

ROBYN

You like anyone who likes you.

ANGELA
(pleased)

You think she likes me?

(Angela leaves the room.)

ROBYN

What do you think?

LINDA

I don't know. She seems nice.

Robyn / Linda

ROBYN

(re Linda's comment)

Diplomatic. Considering how she treated you.

LINDA

Me?

ROBYN

Yes. So ... dismissive. She made it pretty clear she wasn't interested in anything you had to say.

LINDA

(surprised)

Oh. You think so?

ROBYN

You are far too sweet Linda. Too forgiving. You let people take advantage of you.

(A few beats as they clean and
Linda contemplates.)

LINDA

What do you think of her?

ROBYN

Oh she's fine. Doesn't bother me.

(beat)

I mean I'd obviously prefer someone who wasn't such an intellectual lightweight.

LINDA

She's read Dostoyevsky.

ROBYN

Hmmph.

LINDA

She has a lot to say.

ROBYN

Of what substance though?

(beat)

She obviously drives Sam crazy.

(She didn't. Robyn is manipulating.
Her place as leader of the group is
under threat but she could never
admit that.)

Robyn / Linda

LINDA

Really? You think so?

ROBYN

For sure. I think that's why she chose to jog home.

LINDA

She said that was penance for all the cake.

ROBYN

Look Sam's never been one to complain, but I could tell she was pretty irritated by the time we finished. Maybe she's regretting her decision to invite Katie.

LINDA

Really? We should ask her?

ROBYN
(quickly)

No! Don't. I mean ... we don't want to embarrass her. She probably feels bad enough for inviting Katie without asking us. There's no way she'll want to admit her mistake.

LINDA
(agreeing)

And things will settle down.

ROBYN

Perhaps ...

LINDA

Not easy to join a group that's been meeting for years.

ROBYN

No. Of course not.

(forced light)

And look, if you're happy, I'm happy.

(The lights go down, then come up quickly on Sam and Robyn, spotlit, talking on the phone.)

ROBYN
(to phone)

Linda isn't happy.

SAM

Really?

7 - ANGELA/ROBYN'S HOUSE (PAST)

(Book club is in session. Robyn is pleased to be holding court.)

ROBYN

Now you'd have noticed the Bildungsroman plot of Jane Eyre

(Linda is in the spotlight.
She addresses the audience.)

LINDA

This month's book, Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. Centred around a strong and independent female protagonist. Sounds like /

(SFX: DOORBELL as Katie rushes in - late.)

SAM

Here she is.

ANGELA
(noticing)

With cake!

KATIE

And chocolate!
Ah. Sorry I'm late.

ROBYN

Again.

KATIE
(noticing Robyn's new chic footwear)

Nice shoes.

ROBYN
(self conscious)

Oh. Thank you. They were on sale.

ANGELA

They're ridiculous. She'll break her neck.

KATIE

Least she'll go out in style.

ANGELA

Well I wouldn't wear them.

KATIE

(to Robyn)

It's when your mother says she "would" wear your shoes you should worry.

(Robyn allows herself a small smile.)

ANGELA

Maybe we should get back to the book.

ROBYN

Yes. The book.

KATIE

(noticing a picture where the ducks were ...)

New art.

ROBYN

Mmm. Yes. Overdue for a change.

ANGELA

In your opinion.

KATIE

Nice.

ROBYN

Thank you. I like the muted tones.

KATIE

Me too.

(Robyn is pleased.)

KATIE

But I think I preferred the ducks.

ANGELA

Dead ducks now.

ROBYN
(quickly)

Like I was saying the Bildungsroman plot of Jane Eyre

SAM

The what?

KATIE

It's a fancy way of saying "Coming of Age" story.

(Katie flings her hair forward between her knees to gather it up and put it in a pony tail. The others are transfixed. She is oblivious to the impact she has.)

ROBYN

(trying to ignore her)

... gives us fly on the wall insights into the societal norms of the period across various institutions including a school, a well to do fam

(to Katie)

What are you doing?

KATIE

What?

ANGELA

Haven't you got the most amazing hair.

KATIE

Yeah. But I'm getting it cut off.

ANGELA/LINDA/SAM

(together)

No!

(Robyn can't believe this is up for discussion. She sighs but no one is listening.)

KATIE

It's too hot. Gets in the way. Thought I'd get a boy cut.

ANGELA

That'd be a travesty.

KATIE

It's only hair.

ROBYN

Exactly!

ANGELA

(to Robyn)

Oh darling, *yours* is only hair.

KATIE

(to Robyn)

We should get it cut together. A boy cut would suit you.

8 - SHOP (PAST)

(Katie is pushing a trolley. She is choosing some chocolate when Linda sees her and approaches.)

LINDA

Tell me you're not bringing those decadent treats tonight?

(Katie turns with a smile.)

KATIE

Oh Linda. Hi. No. They're for my Nan.

LINDA

Good. Or I'll have to jog home with Sam.

KATIE

You can rest easy. I'm not coming back.

LINDA

What? No. Why not?

KATIE

I just don't think Book Club is for me.

LINDA

But you seemed so into it.

KATIE

(quickly)

I am. I mean ... I was. It's not that I don't enjoy it. I love it! What I mean is ... not so much that it's not for me, more that ... I'm not for it.

(explains)

I think I upset the dynamics.

LINDA

No ... Katie ... Why would you think that?

KATIE

(shrugs)

It's what I do ... and I'm always last to realise. No filter.

(beat)

Come on Linda. Admit it. I'm the proverbial bull in a china shop. You'll be glad to see the back of me.

LINDA

No. No way. That's just not true.

KATIE
(doubtful)

Well ... You mightn't.

(pulling a book from her bag)

Robyn lent me one of her self help books.

LINDA

Robyn doesn't read self help books.

KATIE

Thought it looked a bit new. She dropped it at my reception.

LINDA
(surprised)

Personally?

KATIE

Yep.

LINDA
(reads the cover)

The Key to Mindful Communication: Or How Not to Piss Off Friends and Relatives.

KATIE

Subtle. Not!

LINDA

Oh ... I'm sure she was just being ... friendly.

KATIE

It's okay Linda ...

LINDA

You told us yourself you're not good at reading people.

KATIE

I'm not. But a whole book ...

LINDA

Come on Katie. It won't be the same.

KATIE

I think that's the point.

LINDA
(re book)

Maybe she thought you'd be interested ... from a professional point of view.

Robyn / Linda

KATIE
(not convinced)

Mmmm.

LINDA
You know I bet that's it. She'll probably be hurt if you quit after she's reached out to you.

KATIE
Hurt?

LINDA
Robyn is awkward. She isn't great at saying what she means. So she does gifts. I'm sure she likes you. You've livened things up. We need you.

(Katie looks unsure.)

(The lights go out and Linda is lit only by a spotlight. She addresses the audience.)

LINDA
I told myself I was being a friend. And I've tried to convince myself that's the reality. But deep down I know the truth. I only insisted Katie come back because as much as she'd thrown us all off kilter ...

(a beat)

I just loved watching Katie stand up to Robyn in a way I never could!

9 - ANGELA/ROBYN'S HOUSE (PAST)

(Linda arrives for Book Club and steps through the open door into the dark house. Robyn is brooding in her seat, lit only by a reading lamp.)

LINDA

Oh. Robyn. Hello. Am I first?

ROBYN

Yes. Where's Sam?

LINDA

Wouldn't get in the car. Had to run off some steam. Said Charlotte called her in tears but wouldn't say why.

ROBYN

Isn't she always in tears.

LINDA

I think this was more serious.

ROBYN

Oh. I hope not. But Sam is always late.
(Robyn looks at her watch.)
She's allergic to rules.

LINDA
(surprised)

Rules?

ROBYN

We're meant to start at seven.

LINDA
(forced light)

Ish!

ROBYN

Seven!

(beat)

And we don't invite new members without a unanimous vote.

LINDA

But that wasn't a "rule".

Robyn / Linda

ROBYN

Unstated but obvious I'd've thought.

LINDA

Katie's okay. She's just a bit ...

ROBYN

Irritating. Obnoxious.

LINDA

Enthusiastic.

(beat)

She'll calm down.

ROBYN

With a tranquilizer dart. What was Sam thinking?

LINDA

She thought it would be good to inject some new ... energy.

ROBYN

(over)

Energy? She's exhausting!

(beat)

What do you think?

LINDA

Well I suppose she can be a bit ... (overbearing)

ROBYN

(over)

She has no respect for your opinions!

LINDA

Oh I'm not sure ... (about that.)

ROBYN

She talks over you!

LINDA

I don't think she means ... (anything by it)

ROBYN

(cutting her off)

Cuts you off!

LINDA

Does she? I hadn't really ... (noticed)

Robyn / Linda

ROBYN

Laughs even when you make a valid point.

LINDA

Only when ... (I'm trying to be funny.)

ROBYN

(laughing)

What! When she has something to say? That's always! She's just so dismissive of you Linda.

LINDA

You really think ... (so.)

(Robyn waves her away dismissively ...)

ROBYN

Pffft.

(Angela enters from the kitchen with plates of food.)

ANGELA

(to Robyn)

Oh for goodness sake. Are you still sulking?

(She puts the food down and switches on the overhead lights.)

Hello Linda. Robyn's having a moment.

LINDA

(lost in thought)

Hi.

ANGELA

(to Robyn re table cloth)

Did you actually iron this?

ROBYN

Yes.

(As Angela tries to smooth out the wrinkles with her hand ...)

ANGELA

Well it's not apparent.

(Sam arrives puffing. She bends forward to catch her breath and checks her watch.)

ROBYN

She barely knows you.

SAM

Still ...

ROBYN

Oh, and I don't suppose you mind that she told me she usually reads "academic papers" but when "Ms Gym Junkie" invited her along she assumed she'd be reading popular fiction and chick lit!

SAM

(taken aback)

Oh Really? Well maybe that's a bit presumptuous.

ROBYN

A bit! She had you pinned as a dimwit.

SAM

(trying to be diplomatic)

Mmm. Do you think I'm giving off the wrong vibe?

ROBYN

No! It's not you. It's her!

LINDA

Or maybe we just aren't used to her honesty. Most people aren't as brave as Katie.

(Something Linda feels she lacks.)

SAM

Absolutely. It takes a certain strength to be that honest.

LINDA

Maybe we all need to be a bit more honest with friends.

ROBYN

(over)

Friends maybe. But is Katie a friend? I mean, friends are people who've earned your respect. You are friends. You're my best friends.

(Linda and Sam are momentarily floored. Robyn is just one small part of their busy lives, but clearly they mean much more to her.)

SAM/LINDA
(surprised)

We are?

ROBYN

Of course.

(covers)

Well ... Among others.

ANGELA

Place is teeming with them.

ROBYN

Unless I've misread ... (things.)

SAM/LINDA

No! No. Of course not!

LINDA

You're a wonderful friend. We've always had a wonderful time at book club.

ROBYN
(to Sam)

Then I just don't understand why you had to invite her.

SAM

I guess I just thought it would be fun. Stop us getting too set in our ways.

ROBYN

We? Or me? Boring old Robyn.

SAM

No. Not at all. You aren't boring Robyn.

ROBYN

It's okay. I know I'm not the world's most exciting person.

LINDA

That's not true.

ANGELA

It's a bit true.

LINDA

Angela! Please don't tease.

ANGELA

Sorry.

SAM

You know I think Robyn is right!

ANGELA
(shocked)

Sam!

SAM
(realising)

No! Not about that. I mean ...
(beat)
... maybe Katie should go.

LINDA/ANGELA

Really?

SAM

Well yes. I feel bad.
(to Robyn)
You're so upset.

ROBYN

If she goes then I'll feel bad.

SAM

But you already do. You're sad.
(beat)
And if Katie has been insensitive towards you then I should have spoken up.

LINDA

We probably all should have. But I'm sure if we ...

ROBYN
(over to Sam)

So you don't think I'm just being oversensitive?

ANGELA

Maybe a bit.

LINDA

Angela.

SAM

No! You open your home to us, make us feel welcome every month. I should have been more careful.

ROBYN

(suddenly feeling better)

Right ... So it's decided then.

ANGELA

Is it?

LINDA

Wait a tic. I think we need to discuss it

ROBYN

We just did.

(to Sam)

And since you invited her - you should tell her!

SAM

(shocked)

Me!!

(Linda and Sam are shocked how quickly it's a done deal.)

LINDA

Hang on. Let's just assess ... (the situation)

ANGELA

(to Sam)

It makes sense. You do know her best.

LINDA

Wait!

(to Angela)

You wanted her to stay.

ANGELA

Not at my daughter's expense though. You want Robyn miserable?

LINDA

Of course not.

ANGELA

Then there's no way around it. Sam will tell her.

SAM

But I've got the most to lose! She's the boys' speech pathologist! They've been doing great work. This could jeopardise everything.

LINDA

Did you enjoy the book Katie?

KATIE
(confused)

Which one?

ROBYN
(quickly)

We need to Talk About Katie.

ANGELA

Kevin!

ROBYN

Yes. Kevin! Let's start.

SAM
(returning)

Something's really up. She hung up on me.

ROBYN
(concerned)

You want to call her back?

(Sam shakes her head.)

ROBYN

Good. It is a bit ... (annoying)

KATIE
(over as she takes some food)

All forgiven! So do you all want to know why I'm late?

ROBYN
(sighs)

Do we have a choice?

KATIE
I accidentally took this woman's car space when I stopped to get these ...
(She pulls an expensive box of
chocolates from her bag.)

Divine! Anyway she attacked me. Metaphorically speaking.

LINDA

Really? What did she say?

KATIE

(grabbing Angela)

She grabbed me by the arm, shook me and said “Selfish, fucking, bitch!”

ANGELA

Oh my god!

SAM

That’s common assault.

KATIE

(laughs)

Not that common.

ROBYN

And not “metaphorical”.

KATIE

Huh?

LINDA

(explains)

You mean an actual assault ... Not metaphorical.

KATIE

(dismissive)

Oh. Whatever.

(In reference to her earlier assertion that Katie is rude to her Robyn turns to Linda.)

ROBYN

(sotto)

Dismissive!

(As Katie turns away to pour herself a big glass of wine.)

SAM

(to Katie)

So what did you do? Did you call the police?

KATIE

No. I started laughing.

(And she starts to laugh at the memory.)

SAM

What? Why?

KATIE

It's what I do ...

(She is still laughing as ...)

When I'm nervous! I laugh and say inappropriate things. I think it's a coping mechanism or something. It started at my Aunty's funeral when I was eleven. All my little cousins, their mother's coffin covered in flowers and their little farewell pictures ...

(laughing harder)

I just lost it. And it didn't matter how much dad glared at me and mum poked me I just couldn't stop. You should have seen the priest. He thought I was Satan in hair braids.

(She is laughing so much that Sam and Linda are starting to as well.)

SAM

Oh my god. That's awful.

KATIE

I know. It's horrendous. But it's like blushing, or a stutter. It just happens.

ROBYN

(under her breath)

How ridiculous.

LINDA

Have you seen anyone about it?

KATIE

(laughing harder still)

Who? An exorcist?

LINDA

I just thought ... (it might be helpful to see someone)

ROBYN

(defending Linda)

Linda is trying to make a valid point. You always dismiss her.

KATIE

(surprised)

Do I?

LINDA

Maybe a bit. Just sometimes.

KATIE
(to Angela)

More wine?

ROBYN/ANGELA
(together)

NO! / YES!

ROBYN
(to Angela)

That's your fourth.

ANGELA

Fifth actually.

(Katie fills Angela's glass.)

KATIE

Chin chin.

ROBYN
(to KATIE)

You, my friend, are being a right and proper twat!

KATIE
(incredulous)

Twat!?

(That sets them all off again.)

SAM
(through her laughter)

Not very literary Robyn.

KATIE
Ah but it is. Browning misused "twat" in his poem "Pippa Passes". He thought it was an item of nun's clothing ...

ROBYN
How ridiculous.

KATIE
(recites)

Then owls and bats
Cows and twats
Monks and nuns in a cloister's moods
Adjourn to the oak-stump pantry

ROBYN

I wish you'd adjourn.

ANGELA

(to Katie ignoring Robyn)

That's incredible. How do you know that?

KATIE

The nun's in twats beat it into us in high school.

LINDA

You really do have an amazing memory.

KATIE

I told you! And nuns in twats can be pretty persuasive.

ANGELA

(laughing)

You do know twat is another word for a woman's genitals?

(This makes Linda, Sam and Katie laugh harder.)

ROBYN

Mother!

KATIE

Well aren't you full of surprises tonight Angie.

ROBYN

Her name is Angela.

ANGELA

I like Angie. Makes me feel young.

ROBYN

Mother! Stop ... You're making a fool of yourself.

ANGELA

Oh blow it out your arse Robyn.

(The others burst out laughing again.)

ROBYN

My god. Since when did you use words like arse!

ANGELA

Since you started acting like one.

Angela / Robyn

ROBYN

Hello girls.

(They both jump with fright.)

LINDA & SAM

(together)

Aaahh. Robyn! / Robyn! You scared us.

ROBYN

I'm so glad you could make it.

(Robyn looks even better in real life.
She is dressed stylishly, has lost weight
and has a neat "boy" haircut.)

ROBYN

Wow, look at you two. You haven't changed a bit.

LINDA

You have! You look amazing.

(Then realising ...)

I mean ... Not that you didn't before. You just look quite ... different.

ROBYN

(warm)

That's okay. I feel different. Very!

(An awkward pause.)

SAM

Katie always said you'd suit a boy cut.

ROBYN

(smiles beatifically)

Yes. She did didn't she. Check out the shoes.

(They look down at her stunning,
flamboyant high heels.)

SAM

They're fabulous.

LINDA

Amazing.

(Awkward pause.)

Angela / Robyn

SAM

This is a big event.

ROBYN

It's been a long time in the planning. A dream come true really.

LINDA

Is Angela here?

ROBYN

Of course. Bossing the caterers around. Worried they won't have enough food. You know mum.

(She starts leading them through the crowd. Sam and Linda swap a look at the new affectionate term that's replaced Mother!)

SAM/LINDA

(sotto)

Mum!

(As they follow her ...)

LINDA

We've been trying to get in touch Robyn.

ROBYN

(without looking at them)

Yes. My publisher told me. I'm sorry about that.

SAM

(forced light)

We were starting to think you were ... avoiding us.

ROBYN

It's been a very busy time.

(changing the subject)

Ahh, there she is.

(ANGELA is holding two bowls of olives.)

ANGELA

(to Robyn)

Oh there you are. I expressly said, No Olives! They'll have to gather them all up.

Angela / Robyn

ROBYN
(gentle)

Oh Mum ...

ANGELA

And someone tried to pinch a goodie bag. Can you believe ... (that!)

(But Robyn has taken an olive and
popped it in her mouth. The world
stands still for a long beat as the
others watch - incredulous.)

ROBYN

They're delicious.

(taking the olives)

Leave them.

(She puts them on a nearby table.)

ANGELA

But Robyn, don't you think ... (it's inappropriate.)

ROBYN

(indicating Sam and Linda)

It's fine. And look who's here ...

ANGELA

(noticing)

Oh goodness. I don't believe it. Linda. Sam. You came.

SAM

Couldn't resist.

LINDA

Hi Angela.

(They kiss on the cheek.)

ANGELA

Hello darlings. You look wonderful. Both of you.

LINDA

You too. So what's it like living with a newly published author?

ROBYN

Oh god no. Mum hasn't had to put up with me for years.

(And Angela is still unhappy at
losing control over her daughter.)

Angela / Robyn

ANGELA
(forced light)

That's right. She just up and left.

ROBYN

Oh mum.

(She gives Angela a quick hug
around the shoulders.)

I went travelling girls. I stopped 'trying' to write and went off to find a life to write about. Europe, Africa, Egypt Morocco! Incredible. I was unstoppable for years. I'd just save and go. Save and go. Until finally it was time to come home ...

(beat)

... and write.

SAM
(blunt)

About a book club?

ROBYN

Yes.

LINDA
(pointed)

After all that travel?

ROBYN

It was the story that had to be told. The thing that had the greatest impact on me.

SAM

Had a pretty big impact on all of us actually. Which is why ...(we'd like to know)

(An announcement comes over the speakers.)

MC
(voice over)

Ladies and gentlemen please help yourself to a drink and join us nearer the stage. The formalities are about to begin.

ROBYN
(smiles)

Sorry girls. That's my cue. You know I'm really glad you're here.

(Robyn walks away towards the stage. Linda and Sam swap a look of alarm. They hurry to catch Robyn.)

ROBYN
(admits)

And you'll get them.
(indicates the stage).

LINDA

Wait! Why Killing Katie? Why imply it was anything but an accident Robyn?

(Robyn takes a deep breath. She
realises she will have to give them
something.)

ROBYN

Well, there are two reasons. Alliteration ...
(She gives a small laugh. The
others aren't amused.)
and truth! Accident implies no one was responsible.
(beat)

(She goes to move off.)

SAM

What are you ... (saying?)

ANGELA
(over)

Oh my god. So now you're laying blame?

ROBYN

It's overdue Mum. I invited you all here so I could say something.

LINDA

After ignoring our messages when WE wanted to say something.

(Unsure what else to do
Robyn heads for the stage.)

SAM

Robyn I know I shouldn't have taken that call. If I could take back those seconds.
Maybe they could have saved her.
(to the others)

God knows I'd never have invited Katie in the first place if I'd known how you'd
all react.

LINDA

All! What did I do?

SAM

Well you agreed to get rid of her.

LINDA

That was Robyn's idea. And it was you who agreed first.

SAM

Oh so you're blameless.

LINDA

Did I say that?

SAM

As much as.

LINDA

My god Sam. I'd never blame you.

ANGELA

I would.

LINDA/SAM

What?

ANGELA

Well like you said ... you invited her.

SAM

And you force fed her an olive. But would I say that!

ANGELA

Apparently. Yes!

SAM

Ah, so you can dish it out.

ROBYN

Wait! Stop. Please listen ...

LINDA

No Robyn. It's your turn to listen. Finally. In fact you should all listen. It was me. I was to blame.

SAM/ANGELA/ROBYN
(loud)

You!?

(They all hesitate as the eyes of the room turn on them. They smile awkwardly at the other guests then continue in whispers.)

LINDA

She wasn't going to come back.

SAM

When?

LINDA

I ran into her just before that last book club.

(to Robyn)

She got your message loud and clear. She knew you wanted her out. And then, believe it or not, I convinced her otherwise. Told her you liked her. I told her we needed her.

SAM

We did.

ANGELA
(to Linda)

So what?! You were just too nice to kick her out.

LINDA

No I wish that was true. But I wasn't being nice! I was being selfish. You see I wanted her to stay

(admits)

because Katie stood up to you ... In a way I never could.

ROBYN

Exactly!

ANGELA

Oh stop it all of you. Sam was right. We all know who killed Katie. I gave her that olive. It's as simple as that.

SAM

I shouldn't have said that Ange.

ANGELA

But it's true.

LINDA

You were just being kind.

ANGELA

I was not being kind. I wanted it all to stop.

ROBYN

Mother!

SAM/LINDA
(to Robyn)

Mum!!

ANGELA

... Because she was upsetting you.

SAM

It all comes back to her! (Robyn)

ROBYN
(loud)

Exactly! NOW STOP IT!

(They all go quiet as Robyn strides towards the launch stage. Once up there she takes a long deep breath to steady herself.)

ROBYN

I'd like to start with an excerpt. It's the central character ruminating on her history ...

(she puts on her reading glasses and smiles nervously around at the audience then starts to read from her novel. The lights slowly dim until she is in a spotlight alone.)

"No doubt you've heard of the butterfly effect. Some years ago I met a woman who was everything I wasn't - spontaneous, open, honest and unafraid! There was so much I could've learned from her but I resisted it all. I flapped my wings and set a chain of events in motion that ended in a beautiful life lost."

(The light goes out on Robyn)